



"OVER THE TOP"

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

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MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

CHAPTER XXIV—Continued.

Just as he finished speaking, the welcome "pup-pup" of a machine gun in their rear rang out, and the front line of the crushing Germans seemed to melt away. They wavered, but once again came rushing onward. Down went their second line. The machine gun was taking an awful toll of lives. Then again they tried to advance, but the machine gun mowed them down. Dropping their rifles and bombs, they broke and fled in a wild rush back to their trench, amid the cheers of "D" company. They were forming again for another attempt, when in the rear of D company came a mighty cheer. The ammunition had arrived and with it a battalion of Scotch to re-enforce them. They were saved. The unknown machine gunner had come to the rescue in the nick of time.

With the re-enforcements it was an easy task to take the third German line.

After the attack was over, the captain and three of his noncommissioned officers, wended their way back to the position where the machine gun had done its deadly work. He wanted to thank the gunner in the name of D company for his magnificent deed. They arrived at the gun, and an awful sight met their eyes.

Lloyd had reached the front line trench, after his company had left it. A strange company was slowly crawling up the trench ladders. They were re-enforcements going over. They were Scotch, and they made a magnificent sight in their brightly colored kilts and bare knees.

Jumping over the trench, Lloyd raced across "No Man's Land," unheeding the rain of bullets, leaping over dark forms on the ground, some of which lay still, while others called out to him as he sped past.

He came to the German front line, but it was deserted, except for heaps of dead and wounded—a grim tribute to the work of his company, good old D company. Leaping trenches, and gasping for breath, Lloyd could see right ahead of him his company in a dead-ended gap of a communication trench, and across the open, away in front of them, a mass of Germans preparing for a charge. Why didn't D company fire on them? Why were they so strangely silent? What were they waiting for? Then he knew—their ammunition was exhausted.

But what was that on his right? A machine gun. Why didn't it open fire and save them? He would make that gun's crew do their duty. Rushing over to the gun he saw why it had not opened fire. Scattered around its base lay six will forms. They had brought their gun to consolidate the captured position, but a German machine gun had decreed they would never fire again.

Lloyd rushed to the gun and, grasping the traversing handles, trained it on the Germans. He pressed the thumb piece, but only a sharp click was the result. The gun was unloaded. Then he realized his helplessness. He did not know how to load the gun. Oh, why hadn't he attended the machine-gun course in England? He'd been offered the chance, but with a blush of shame he remembered that he had been afraid. The nickname of the machine gunners had frightened him. They were called the "Suicide club." Now, because of this fear, his company would be destroyed, the men of D company would have to die, because he, Albert Lloyd, had been afraid of a game. In his shame he cried like a baby. Anyway he could die with them and, rising to his feet, he stumbled over the body of one of the gunners, who emitted a faint moan. A gleam of hope flashed through him. Perhaps this man could tell him how to load the gun. Stooping over the body he gently shook it and the soldier opened his eyes. Seeing Lloyd, he closed them again and, in a faint voice, said:

"Get away, you blighter, leave me alone. I don't want any coward around me."

The words cut Lloyd like a knife, but he was desperate. Taking the revolver out of the holster of the dying man he pressed the cold muzzle to the soldier's head and replied:

"Yes, it is Lloyd, the coward of Company D, but so help me God, if you don't tell me how to load that gun I'll put a bullet through your brain!"

A sunny smile came over the countenance of the dying man and he said in a faint whisper:

"Good old boy! I knew you wouldn't disgrace our company—"

Lloyd interposed: "For God's sake, if you want to save that company you are so proud of, tell me how to load that d—d gun!"

As if reciting a lesson in school, the soldier replied in a weak, singsong voice: "Insert end of belt in feed block, with left hand pull belt left front. Pull crank handle back on roller, let go, and repeat motion. Gun is now loaded. To fire, raise automatic safety latch, and press thumbpiece. Gun is now firing. If gun stops, ascertain position of crank handle—"

But Lloyd waited for no more. With wild joy at his heart, he took a belt from one of the ammunition boxes lying beside the gun, and followed the dying man's instructions. Then he pressed the thumbpiece and a burst of fire rewarded his efforts. The gun was working.

Training it on the Germans he shouted for joy as their front rank went down.

Traversing the gun back and forth along the mass of Germans, he saw them break and run back to the cover of their trench, leaving their dead and wounded behind. He had saved his company, he, Lloyd, the coward, had "done his bit." Releasing the thumbpiece, he looked at the watch on his wrist. He was still alive at "3:38."

"Ping!"—a bullet sang through the air, and Lloyd fell forward across the gun. A thin trickle of blood ran down his face from a little, black round hole in his forehead.

"The sentence of the court had been duly carried out."

The captain slowly raised the limp form drooping over the gun and, wiping the blood from the white face, recognized it as Lloyd, the coward of D company. Reverently covering the face with his handkerchief he turned to his "noncoms" and, in a voice husky with emotions, addressed them:

"Boys, it's Lloyd, the deserter. He has redeemed himself, died the death of a hero—died that his mates might live."

That afternoon a solemn procession wended its way toward the cemetery. In the front a stretcher was carried by two sergeants. Across the stretcher the Union Jack was carefully spread. Behind the stretcher came a captain and forty-three men, all that were left of D company.

Arriving at the cemetery, they halted in front of an open grave. All about them wooden crosses were broken and trampled into the ground.

A grizzled old sergeant, noting this destruction, muttered under his breath: "Curse the cowardly blighter who wrecked those crosses! If I could only get these two hands around his neck his trip West would be short."

The corpse on the stretcher seemed to move, or it might have been the wind blowing the folds of the Union Jack.

CHAPTER XXV.

Preparing for the Big Push. Rejoining Atwell after the execution I had a hard time trying to keep my secret from him. I think I must have lost at least ten pounds worrying over the affair.

Beginning at seven in the evening it was our duty to patrol all communica-

tion and front-line trenches, making note of unusual occurrences, and arresting anyone who should, to us, appear to be acting in a suspicious manner. We slept during the day.

Behind the lines there was great activity, supplies and ammunition pouring in, and long columns of troops constantly passing. We were preparing for the big offensive, the forerunner of the battle of the Somme or "Big Push."

The never-ending stream of men, supplies, ammunition and guns pouring into the front lines made a mighty spectacle, one that cannot be described. It has to be witnessed with your own eyes to appreciate its vastness.

At our part of the line the influx of supplies never ended. It looked like a huge snake slowly crawling forward, never a hitch or break, a wonderful tribute to the system and efficiency of Great Britain's "contemptible little army" of five millions of men.

Huge fifteen-inch guns snaked along, foot by foot, by powerful steam tractors. Then a long line of "four point five" batteries, each gun drawn by six horses, then a couple of "nine point two" howitzers pulled by immense caterpillar engines.

When one of these caterpillars would pass me with its mighty monster in tow, a flush of pride would mount to my face, because I could plainly read on the name plate, "Made in U. S. A.," and I would remember that if I wore a name plate it would also read, "From the U. S. A." Then I would stop to think how thin and straggly that mighty stream would be if all the "Made in U. S. A." parts of it were withdrawn.

Then would come hundreds of limbers and "G. S." wagons drawn by sleek, well-fed mules, ridden by sleek, well-fed men, ever smiling, although grimy with sweat and covered with the fine, white dust of the marvelously well-made French roads.

What a discouraging report the German airmen must have taken back to their division commanders, and this stream is slowly but surely getting bigger and bigger every day, and the pace is always the same. No slower, no faster, but ever onward, ever forward.

Three weeks before the big push of July 1—as the battle of the Somme has been called—started, exact duplicates of the German trenches were dug about thirty kilos behind our lines. The layout of the trenches was taken from airplane photographs submitted by the Royal flying corps. The trenches were correct to the foot; they showed dugouts, saps, barbed wire defenses and danger spots.

Battalions that were to go over in the first waves were sent back for three days to study these trenches, engage in practice attacks and have night maneuvers. Each man was required to make a map of the trenches and familiarize himself with the names and location of the parts his battalion was to attack.

In the American army noncommissioned officers are put through a course of map making or road sketching, and during my six years' service in the United States cavalry I had plenty of practice in this work, therefore mapping these trenches was a comparatively easy task for me. Each man had to submit his map to the company commander to be passed upon, and I was lucky enough to have mine selected as being sufficiently authentic to use in the attack.

No photographs or maps are allowed to leave France, but in this case it appealed to me as a valuable souvenir of the great war and I managed to smuggle it through. At this time it carries no military importance as the British lines, I am happy to say, have since been advanced beyond this point, so in having it in my possession I am not breaking any regulation or cautions of the British army.

The whole attack was rehearsed and rehearsed until we heartily cursed the one who had conceived the idea. The trenches were named according to a system which made it very simple for Tommy to find, even in the dark, any point in the German lines.

These imitation trenches, or trench models, were well guarded from observation by numerous allied planes which constantly circled above them. No German airplane could approach within observation distance. A restricted area was maintained and no civilian was allowed within three miles, so we felt sure that we had a great surprise in store for Fritz.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Isinglass From Fish Boulders. Isinglass is made from the sounds or swimming bladders of fish. One ton of hake, says the Popular Science Monthly, will yield from 40 to 50 pounds of sounds. These are dried, soaked, cut in pieces, rolled into sheets and cut into ribbons. The ribbons are dried and wound on wooden spools. One ounce of isinglass will clarify from 200 to 500 gallons of wine and one pound will clarify from 100 to 500 barrels of beer. It is used for mending glass and pottery and for adhesive plaster and enters into the manufacture of many textiles and waterproof fabrics.

Tea Plant Purposely Dwarfed. In its wild state the tea plant grows to a height of from ten to twenty feet; in cultivating it its size is kept down to about three feet for convenience in picking. The tea of Japan is mostly of the green variety. Considerable black tea is exported, but is grown mainly on the island of Formosa. The seed is usually planted in terraces that extend from the bases of hills to their very crests, like giant steps that conform with the general contour of the hillside. During picking time one may see large groups of tea-pickers (mostly women) gradually working their way downward from the top of a hill.

FIRST PHOTOGRAPH OF AMERICANS IN CANTIGNY BATTLE



This is the first authentic photograph to reach the United States showing the Americans in the battle of Cantigny, their first really important conflict with the Huns. The first men to go over the top are seen leaping to the attack, while their companions in the trenches await the command to follow. Within 45 minutes the Americans had obtained all their objectives, taking many prisoners.

GREEK NURSES AWAIT WOUNDED COUNTRYMEN



This picture, taken in Athens, shows a corps of Greek army nurses, with flowers and delicacies, awaiting the arrival of wounded Greek soldiers from the hospital ship Lafayette.

QUIT WHITE HOUSE JOBS TO FIGHT



Charles Swem (on the right), the only stenographer who has taken the president's dictation since Mr. Wilson was first elected, and Warren Johnson, personal stenographer to Joseph P. Tumulty, the president's secretary, have joined the army. Swem, who has a wife and a child, will go into the aviation service, while Johnson will be assigned to some other branch. Both have been anxious for some time to get into uniforms.

HERE IS A REAL FLYING FISH OF THE AIR



This Nieuport airplane can rightly be called "the flying fish," judging from the manner in which it is decorated. Its American pilot is standing alongside of his machine, somewhere in France.

DUMMY BOMBS FOR AVIATORS



Two men at Ellington field, Houston, Tex., preparing dummy bombs for the practice work of the aviators who are being trained especially for bombing.

The Padre Scores.

Now and again a guy will take me off to one side and fix it up with me to write his girl or his mother a letter. He is bumped off, promising to do the same for me.

Yet they joke about it, too. For said to the chaplain today: "You won't forget that little matter padre, will you?"

"What little matter is that?" asked the chaplain.

"Why, my tombstone!"

The chaplain looked surprised.

"You never mentioned a tombstone to me," he protested.

"Sure I did! Don't you remember a bottle of rum at hand and foot?"

But the chaplain came back at him.

"No," he said gravely: "for then you wouldn't be quiet."—George Patullo in Saturday Evening Post.

Flour Little Hurt by Sea Water. It is a widely known fact among sailors that flour will not only float after immersion in sea water but suffer very little damage. To prevent the actual damage a bag of flour in the ocean and left it in the water 47 hours. A 98-pound water-tight canister to sink a 150-pound bag which would have supported 75 pounds on top of the water. It is estimated, or half the bag sealed 155 pounds. It was dried for four days and lost 10 pounds of perfectly good flour and waste weighing 10 pounds.



Plants the Tea in a China.